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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

U. S.
MONDAY, October 16, 1933

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

S.H.
SUBJECT: "SOME FALL SOUPS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

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I don't know how you feel about soup in the menu. But I always think that about the time of year when a fire in the fireplace is grateful in the evening, a bowl of hot soup is one of the pleasantest ways to start a meal. As fall creeps along into winter, we need extra warmth and cheer not only around the house but also at the dinner table. So I always think that fall is a good time to go over my collection of soup recipes and look up a few good new soups to add variety to my list.

Speaking of soups naturally reminds me of France and the French. The French are great on soups--thin soup, thick soup and in-between soup, soup made of odds and ends and bits of left-overs, soup that costs practically nothing and tastes like a million. You have probably heard the old saying that the French are such good cooks that they can serve you shoe-leather so temptingly disguised you ask for more. No, don't worry. I have no intention of giving you any soup recipe that calls for shoe leather among the ingredients. But I would like to stress the point that French soups are often founded on food not even as expensive as a piece of shoe leather. The French know how to use bones and left-over bits of meat or inexpensive cuts of meat to make meat stock or broth. And they know how to use inexpensive vegetables like onions and carrots. Moreover, they know how to make the most of seasoning materials from the garden like sorrel leaves, chervil or parsley.

I heard the other day about one of the traditional French soups called "pot-au-feu", pot-on-the-fire. This is a collection of left-over meat, vegetables and vegetable water cooked up in a heavy soup-pot which, in many French homes, stands always on the back of the stove. Into the "pot-au-feu" may go the bones from Sunday's roast, or a fresh soup bone from the butcher. The French are careful to see that bones for soup are cracked and put in cold salted water and simmered for several hours to draw out their flavor. To this meat stock or meat broth, they add the odds and ends from yesterday's meals--perhaps a few cooked carrots, potatoes, tomatoes or other vegetables. And they always add the water in which the vegetables were cooked. As we all know this "pot likker" contains minerals and vitamins. Cooked vegetables go into the soup at the very last, since overcooking vegetables spoils the soup's good flavor. Before this pot-on-the-fire mixture appears on the table, the French strain out the bones and the vegetables and add seasoning.

Another good way that the French fix vegetables for soup is to cook them in butter before they put them into the soup mixture. That's the way they make that famous thick onion-and-cheese soup, which makes such a delicious and inexpensive and nourishing dish for winter meals. If you don't mind, I'd like to stop right

here for a minute and discuss this onion soup. It's one of those dishes that comes in handy if you're planning low-cost meals. You chop about six onions fine. Then you cook them in about two tablespoons of butter or other fat until they turn light brown in color. Then you add them to about a pint of boiling water and simmer them until tender. Now you add about a quart of meat broth. That combination of meat stock and onion is fine! Thicken it with a paste of flour and cold water. Add salt and pepper and cook for a few minutes. Now pour the soup into hot bowls or soup plates and place on the top of each a thin slice of toasted bread. Here's the final touch that makes your onion soup perfect--the touch that perhaps only the French would have thought of--sprinkle some sharp grated cheese over the hot slice of toast and over the top of the soup. Add a dash of bright paprika and serve at once.

The French are also great on another low-cost and nourishing soup--lentil soup. They use onions or leaks or garlic for flavoring lentil soup, they generally make it with meat stock, and they often add a bit of tomato for color and flavor. In this country we aren't so strong for lentils, but we do like our split pea soup, our black bean soup, and so on. All these are legume soups. And they make excellent main dishes for lunch or supper--lunch for the children on a cold Saturday noon, say, or supper on Sunday night. All of these legume soups you can make with ham stock. That helps cut their cost.

Another good and inexpensive all-American soup is peanut butter soup. You can make that either with a milk or tomato sauce base.

The hearty thick soups like the milk soups, the cheese soups and the legume soups make better main dishes than first-course dishes. What we usually want to start a meal on is a flavorsome appetizer, a soup made for its taste and looks rather than for its nourishment. But for our inexpensive cold-weather suppers and luncheons we can well include the nourishing soups often in a place of importance.

That reminds me of today's menu, which features that onion and grated cheese soup. Here's the menu: Onion soup with grated cheese; Browned hash made of the soup meat chopped; Scalloped tomatoes; and for dessert; Fruit sauce made from fall fruits.

Tuesday: "Questions and Answers."

